Assam for development, expansion and upgradation of telecommunication system in rural areas; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the present status of the above schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Cellular Service has been provided in Assam covering 53 towns, including 25 district headquarters and about 1500 kms. of National/State Highways. BSNL is presently engaged in covering additional towns upto tehsil headquarters and remaining National highways. Accordingly, BSNL has recently ordered equipment for the network capacity of 3,21,000 lines for Assam State and capacities are likely to be available progressively during this year.

1K WLL Cordect system has been installed and installation work of 12K is in progress and likely to be completed by March, 2005. Two new telephone exchanges have been installed during 2004-05.

During the year of 2004-05, 45000 telephone connections, both wired line and WLL are planned to be provided in the state of Assam which includes 25000 telephone connections for rural areas. Out of these 25000 telephone connections for rural areas, 12,209 connections have been provided as on 31.01.2005.

72 numbers of 256P C-DOT have been converted to AN RAX to provide the same facility to the subscriber of rural areas as that of the urban ones and a total of 150 numbers are likely to be converted by March, 2005.

Illegal routing of International Calls

327. SHRI JIBOY ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that M/s Reliance Infocomm used networks of two PSUs to route international calls as local calls;

(b) if so, how much money is due to BSNL and MTNL from M/s Reliance Infocomm;

(c) whether it is also a fact that TRAI has not taken any action in this dispute; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) As per provisions of the Interconnect Agreement, BSNL and MTNL have raised bills amounting to Rs. 263.4 crores and Rs. 341.28 crores respectively M/s Reliance Infocomm Ltd. has paid Rs. 182.7 crores to BSNL and Rs. 111.80 crores to MTNL. It has also filed petitions against BSNL and MTNL in the High Court of Delhi and at present, the matter is *sub-judice*.

(c) and (d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had forwarded the complaints to Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Meanwhile DoT has also received complaints from various other sources. The matter was investigated by the core team of DoT and it was concluded thatM/s Reliance Infocomm Ltd. has violated various terms and conditions of the licence agreements. Penalty of Rs. 150 crores was imposed on M/s Reliance Infocomm Ltd. The defaulting company filed a petition in the Telecom Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal against this decision of the DoT and the matter is *sub-judice* at present.

FDI in Telecom Sector

328. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have lately decided to enhance the FDI limits in telecom sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent;

(b) if so, the main reasons for such an increase; and

(c) the level at which FDI stood as on date of decision and as at present indicating the sources and companies investigating additional FDI in the sector and the proposals still pending approval?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) declares that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) will continue to be encouraged and actively